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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers focuses on literacy and the special educational needs of speakers of English as a second language (ESL). In a paper entitled "Ethnic Minority Educational Needs in the 1980s," Gurnam Heire examines some of the changes in employment and training that have taken place over the past few years and how these affect the educational needs of ethnic minority communities. Jane McLaughlin's paper, "Creative Writing in English as a Second Language Work," makes a case for not neglecting the important part that writing can play in working with persons for whom English is a second language. In "Bilingual Teaching and ESL," Sufia Majid emphasizes the importance of the mother tongue and of the bilingual teacher in language and literacy work. Jane Rawlingson Mackillop draws on her experience in southern California in her paper, "Acquisition: A Common Factor in Teaching Literacy to Native and Non-Native Speakers." In the final paper, "Integrating First and Second Language Speakers of English," Frances Graham examines some of the possibilities and problems of mixed literacy provision for those for whom English is a first or second language. (MN)

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VIEWPOINTS

A SERIES OF OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON BASIC EDUCATION

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ETHNIC MINORITY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE 1980's · Gurnam Heire

CREATIVE WRITING IN SECOND LANGUAGE WORK · Jane McLaughlin

BILINGUAL TEACHING AND ESL · Sufia Majid

ACQUISITION IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY · Jane Rawlingson Mackillop

INTEGRATING FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE SPEAKERS · Frances Graham

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Introduction

This issue of Viewpoints focuses on literacy work with adults whose first language is not English. In the first article, Gurnam Heire considers some of the changes in employment and training that have taken place over the past few years and how these affect the educational needs of ethnic minority communities. Jane McLaughlin makes a case for not neglecting the important part which writing can play in English as a second language work, while Sufia Majid in the third article emphasises the importance of the mother tongue and of the bilingual teacher in language and literacy work. Jane Mackillop's article, drawing on experience in southern California, considers the influence of 'real' issues on the acquisition of literacy, and, finally, Frances Graham outlines some of the possibilities and problems of mixed literacy provision for first and second language speakers of English.

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Ethnic Minority Educational Needs in the 1980's

GURNAM HEIRE

Gurnam Heire has been a Project worker on the ALBSU sponsored Independent Learning Project at the Lancashire Industrial Language Training Unit, from September 1983 to March 1985. From this experience he has developed a particular interest in the basic skills needs of ethnic minorities in relation to access to further training and employment.

The educational needs of the ethnic minority communities are constantly changing; hence the importance of examining periodically what those needs are, and how best to meet them. The aim of this article is to explore current needs and some of the issues arising from them.

A HISTORICAL NOTE

Immigrants during the 1960s from the Asian subcontinent were predominantly male, aged between 20 and 35. Their primary goal was to sell their unskilled manual labour for money to improve the economic circumstances of their families who remained at home. As there was a ready market for their labour they were quickly able to find a role for themselves in British industry. The immigrants' needs then were few: jobs with overtime, cheap accommodation and a contact within their own community who could help them in their limited contact with officialdom. Within this very restricted participation in the British system everyone functioned fairly adequately.

As the dependents joined the male heads of families during the late sixties and early seventies, Asian immigrants gradually needed to come to terms with a wider range of institutions. These obviously included education, the health service, building societies and the legal profession. The quantity of activity involved demanded a greater understanding by each individual of the complexities of the social system, since it could no longer be managed through the "community scribe" system.

The necessary need for direct participation gave rise to problems which were diagnosed solely in terms of the immigrants' inadequate command of English. The only response was therefore to establish ESL teaching with its diverse approaches and methods of delivery. The extent to which ESL managed to meet these "social needs" of the past decade is not central to the present argument; the aim of this paper is to concentrate on the expansion of ethnic minority needs, and examine whether the present form and philosophy of ESL can satisfactorily meet the needs created by the new social and economic environment.

THE NEW ENVIRONMENT

The disproportionate effect on the immigrant population of the contracting industrial base has been well documented in a number of surveys and publications. The decline of traditional industries has forced unskilled immigrant workers, whose work experience is often limited to one industry, into a situation where they have to establish a new role in a radically changed labour market.

To examine some of the difficulties that immigrant workers face we need to consider the type of worker required by the future labour market, and the gap between the existing skills of ethnic minority workers and those skills which will be required in the future.

The kind of worker and range of skills required is clearly reflected in the central policy being implemented through the MSC. This policy and the subsequent plan of action are based on a number of assumptions, including the following.:

> "for the foreseeable future, unemployment is likely to continue at a high level"
>
> "overall growth of jobs is more likely in some commercial and service sectors and the new technologies than in manufacturing . . . . . employment in traditional industries will continue to decline"
>
> "the need for education and training for any individual will not be once and for all but continuing"
>
> "not only are jobs increasingly likely to call for a higher standard of occupational competence but, even where they are not technical occupations, they may require technical competence or awareness. These competencies will need to be regularly updated or extended."
>
> (from *Adult Training: MSC Proposals for Action*, Dec 1983)

It is reasonable to conclude that anyone who expects economic reward merely by selling their time rather than skills, as is the case with most ethnic minority workers, is going to be consigned to unemployment or at best the very lowest paid sector.

The new workers will need to be:

- flexible (in terms of changing employment a number of times during their working life)
- technically competent or at least aware
- adept at keeping skills up to date
- adept at recognising and exploiting training/ educational opportunities.

The gap between these key skills and the existing skills of most ethnic minority workers can best be explored through examining the profile of an ethnic minority worker searching for employment or training.

PROFILE OF A TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT SEEKER

Our work on the ALBSU project has brought us into close contact with over 250 trainees and potential trainees. As a result we have been able to construct a composite profile of our client group. Individual members of this group are likely to:

- be between 22 and 45 years old
- have 5 to 10 years of education in their own country, largely non-technical in content
- have 3 to 15 years of work experience in one industry at an unskilled level, which they themselves regard as irrelevant for the future
- have a level of spoken English traditionally labelled between post-elementary and advanced, with rather lower reading and writing skills
- lack awareness of general employment trends and their own potential within them
- lack the strategies and skills needed to promote themselves in the new job markets
- lack the skills and information necessary to evaluate and successfully exploit the existing training/educational opportunities
- have inappropriate learning strategies for success within the present training/educational provision.

If we analyse this profile in terms of future employer requirements as noted above, it is obvious that without comprehensive training, potentially able redundant ethnic minority workers are highly unlikely to find rewarding work in the future.

The need to acquire marketable skills rather than simply selling their time has created vocational rather than purely social needs.

VOCATIONAL NEEDS

From our observation of skills-linked courses and interviews with both trainees and instructors, the major obstacles to effective training of ethnic minorities can be categorised under the following headings:

a) Gaps in trainees' previous education.

b) Trainees' own approach to learning and training.

c) Problems of access.

a) Gaps in trainees' previous education

The trainees' previous education is largely non-practical and non-technical in content. On the other hand much of the available training in this country depends on trainees having already acquired a broad technical education at school. What is regarded by instructors as purely common-sense is, in fact the result of developing *skills* (e.g. technical drawing or use of tools) and *concepts* (e.g. in elementary physics or chemistry) during the school years. Trainees without this background are at a serious disadvantage on training courses, as the learning load of acquiring skills and background knowledge at the same time is too great. For ethnic minority trainees there is of course the additional learning load of coping with all this in their second language.

b) Trainees' own approach to learning and training

Their previous learning and the lapse of time since that learning took place lead the trainees to adopt inappropriate learning strategies. There is a considerable mismatch between instructors' expectations of their trainees and the trainees' own perception of a learner's responsibilities. Again, effective vocational training cannot take place until the trainees' and instructors' perceptions of learning responsibilities coincide. Some of these problems can be resolved by training of staff, but trainees still need orientation towards learning and trade acquisition in order to gain real benefit from courses.

c) Problems of access

Trainees lack information about what is available and its relevance to their own vocational goals. They also lack the necessary skills and strategies for exploring situations outside their normal experience. As a result many are unable to exploit effectively existing training provision.

Institutions assume that their structures allow equal access to every potential applicant; unfortunately these structures often have the effect of presenting barriers rather than facilitating access.

Effective participation within educational and training institutions depends on training for members of the ethnic minority communities and for the institutions themselves.

COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES

Up to this point only brief reference has been made to problems due to language, because they need to be considered in a broader context. Observation in training workshops did reveal instances of communication breakdown; but these were caused more by differences in perception of the task in hand of trainees and instructors rather than directly by language. In other words, it was not the language they talked, but what they were talking *about* that was the root of the problem. Similarly, the difficulties that the trainees encountered during shop talks or lectures were mainly caused by the instructor's assumptions about the trainees than by any "language barrier". Examples include assumptions about trainees' existing skills (e.g. reading of drawings and diagrams), their level of knowledge, and previous experience of learning.

Effective training for ethnic minority adults depends on recognising wider educational needs rather than limiting concern purely to issues of language.

TACKLING THE REAL ISSUES

If the educational system is going to help ethnic minority adults to establish an acceptable role in the future of job markets, it must adopt a radically different approach to their educational needs from the present one, which could be described as based on a linguistically deficient model. Whilst this model may be convenient for the providers it avoids or indefinitely defers the real issues involved in meeting their broader educational needs. In the present employment situation these needs are becoming increasingly critical.

At present education providers erect linguistic hoops which ESL speakers must negotiate before being considered capable of learning anything else. Instead of

this, providers should look at the wider educational needs of ESL speakers and strive to meet them from the very beginning. There are no reasons why a wide variety of subjects cannot be offered to ESL speakers from day one. This approach not only meets educational needs but, as Widdowson[1] maintains, it also provides pedagogically a sounder context for language development itself.

Teachers could argue the impossibility of developing sophisticated concepts without a high level of linguistic competence. But language learning itself involves complex concepts and subtle distinctions, and techniques have been developed to get them across to students. Is there any reason why these techniques could not be employed in other subject areas?

In addition, this approach to ethnic minority education has three very positive consequences.

- It allows an ESL speaker a range of subject areas in which to experience success as a learner. There are people who are simply not very good at learning languages and for whom it is a slow and often painful experience and they should not be deprived of the opportunity to experience success as learners in other areas.
- Integration of English as a 2nd Language (E2L) and English as a 1st Language (E1L) speakers would be possible from very early on. By participating in integrated classes E2L speakers would no longer conform to the linguistically deficient model. As a result their learning would have a higher status within the institution as a whole. This in its turn would reduce the barriers which have to be negotiated by E2L speakers seeking parity in vocational training. The language development techniques required to make the matter explicit to E2L speakers would also be of benefit to many E1L speakers[2]
- Improving one's English is seen as purely a means to an end by E2L speakers, consequently their motivation towards learning remains extrinsic. In the present economic climate it is not always possible to fulfil one's expectations immediately; if there are delays or setbacks extrinsic motivation soon vanishes. It is only by developing an intrinsic motivation towards learning that E2L speakers would be able to sustain their efforts over a long period of study and training. From their present position this learning period could be as long as two or three years.

EXAMPLE OF A COURSE MODEL

Most of the difficulties of retraining E2L speakers mentioned so far were recognised soon after the collapse of traditional industries started.[3] Over the past four years "skills-linked" courses have been developed as a means to overcome some of these problems.

These 19 week courses, generally funded through MSC, consist of 50% communication input and 50% workshop practice equally divided betwen 3 to 6 trade areas. It could be argued that issues that have been raised in this paper have already been resolved. However, our close examination of these courses in Lancashire revealed the following problems:

(a) The course objectives entail an unmanageable learning load for the trainees. A programme of 19 x 30 hours is just not sufficient for covering all necessary areas.

(b) Some of the content (e.g. maths, basic physics, geometry, technical drawing) could be covered in an educational rather than a training context.

(c) Whilst the trainees became aware of the skills necessary to function independently and cope with unpredictable situations, they did not have sufficient opportunity to practise these skills or develop the necessary self-confidence in the time available.

(d) The courses do not integrate E1L and E2L speakers (and were never designed to do this).

(e) The model was originally designed as a step towards employment or further training; but as opportunities became further distanced, the model has now come to be perceived as an extra step. Any programme which does not lead to integration with E1L speakers will inevitably take on this role.

To take account of all these issues the Lancashire Industrial Language Training Unit, in collaboration with the ABLSU Project, has developed a more comprehensive training programme for E2L and E1L adults (see diagram, top of page 5).

It has the following main features:

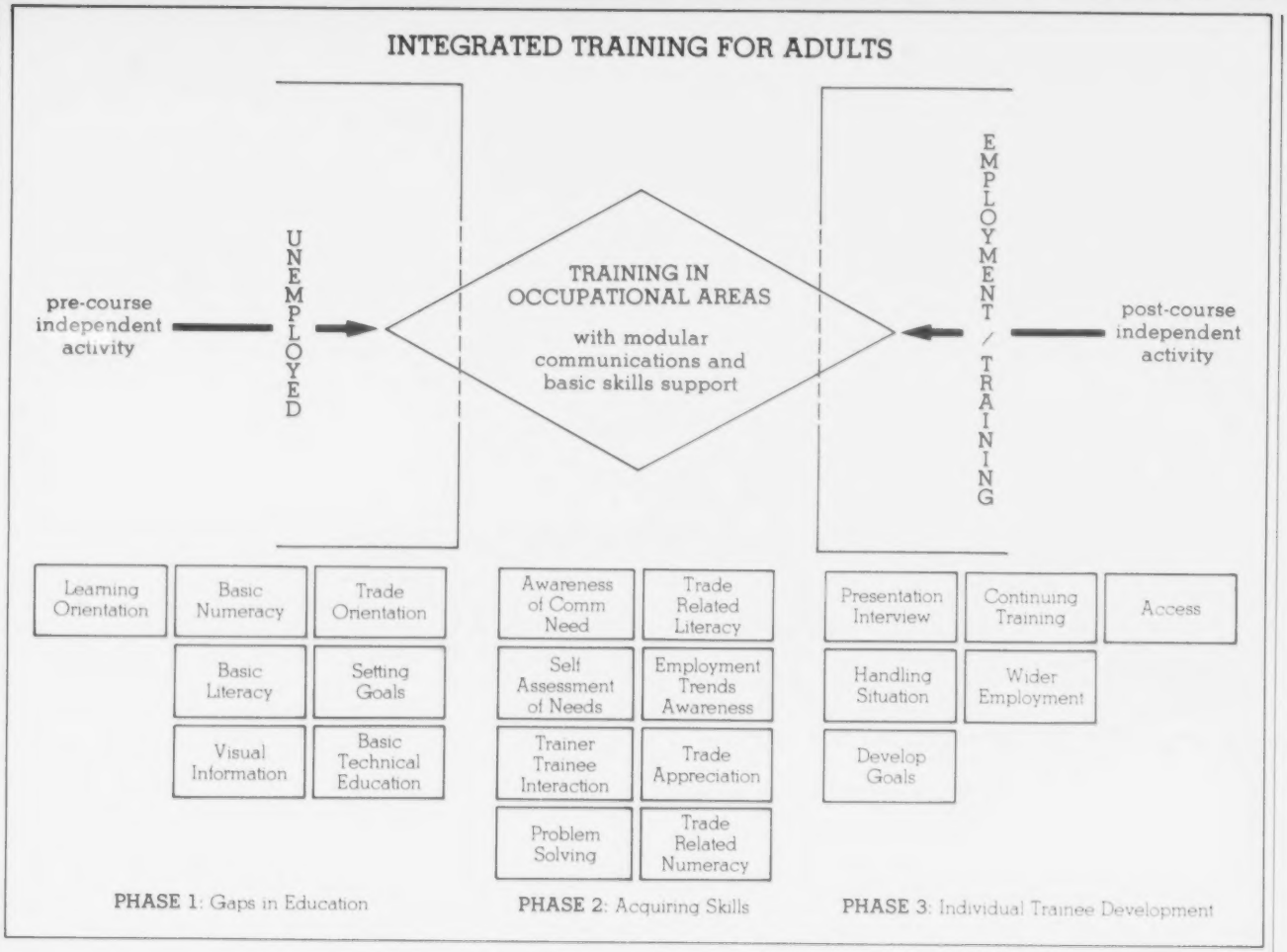
- It separates the broad educational needs from skills acquisition and individual trainee development and provides an appropriate context for each phase.
- The programme lends itself readily to integration of E1L and E2L speakers by looking at their common educational needs rather than emphasising the differences based on language.
- It allows trainees to exercise choice and assess their own needs, as all modules within the programme are optional.
- The programme is flexible enough to incorporate changing trends in employment opportunity.
- The programme is readily transferable to different types of client groups and different occupational areas.
- It cannot be perceived as an extra step for E2L speakers, as it will integrate E1L and E2L speakers.
- Different educational institutions can collaborate to deliver the whole programme.

A programme of this kind will naturally require resources but at present it is not realistic to expect any significant increase in available funding, given that the government "has accepted that it would be unrealistic to expect that any substantial additional public resources will be brought to bear on adult training and education."[4]

It is therefore logical to look at how the existing funds are being used, and ways of redeploying them. As a very substantial proportion of special funding for ethnic minorities (through Section II and the MSC) is channelled through the ESL provision, we clearly need to examine the role of this sector in the context of "vocational needs".

THE ROLE OF THE ESL SECTOR

In the introduction it was argued that the establishment of ESL provision was a response to the ethnic minorities' increasing social participation. Although the needs of the ethnic minorities have now extended beyond mere



language to much broader educational ones, the main mechanism for meeting these needs still remains focused on language.[5] This is also confirmed by the present DES-funded NATESLA research project into ESL teacher-training.

There are however, a number of serious consequences of this continued over-emphasis on language. Among these are:

(a) The ethnic minorities are being distanced more and more from mainstream educational and training opportunities. We are now witnessing situations which highlight this; for example, all the members of a numeracy class at a local FE college went to school in this country; and an adult living in England since the age of 7 whose learning difficulties are still being diagnosed as due to language rather than as the difficulties of a slow learner. When is an ESL learner just a learner? Are ethnic minorities being deprived of educational opportunities for the sake of protecting the vested interest of ESL 'specialists'?

(b) The linguistically deficient model of an ethnic minority learner is beginning to take permanency in their own perception of themselves as learners. Their attention is being diverted away from broader education gaps and their lack of marketable skills.

To evaluate these trainee-perceived needs we interviewed 40 candidates who were about to start a skills-linked course. During this interview all 40 trainees expressed anxiety about their language ability but took their performance in the workshops almost for granted. However, when they were interviewed again at the mid-point of the course all trainees recognised a variety of other needs, for example:

- Maths
- Physics
- Technical Drawing
- Electrical Theory
- "Background Knowledge"
- Information on trades
- General Science
- Knowledge of engineering machines
- Writing practice

These comments suggest that even well-attended ESL classes are not necessarily successful in meeting all ethnic minority educational needs. It is more likely that a vicious circle has been created in which ethnic minorities shape their perceptions of their own needs to match the available provision.

It is naive for ethnic minorities to believe that simply improving their English will result in an improvement in their life-chances — there are after all over 50 million native speakers — and it is crucial that they are given the opportunity of evaluating themselves properly by offering them a much wider educational choice.

(c) The very presence of the ESL sector as the standard bearer for educational rights of ethnic minorities lulls

the policy makers into inaction. Their consciences are salved easily by operating the numbers game; central government can point to funds channelled through Section 11, the Local Authorities to the number of ESL specialists employed under Section 11 and the FE colleges to their ESL departments or even "multi-cultural units". The policy makers will continue to maintain existing policies as long as concern for the education of ethnic minorities retains a narrow language focus.

Despite the obvious disadvantages for ethnic minorities of the ESL provision in its present form there is still a large body of opinion which advocates the separate development policy. A number of reasons[6] are put forward for its continuation, and the next section deals with two of the most recurrent and apparently credible of these arguments.

ARGUMENTS FOR SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT

- The most common argument put forward for the continuation of ESL is that second language learning is completely different from difficulties with literacy in the first language.

Whilst there are many points of divergence, the differences are only of significance within the very narrow scope of meeting language needs. If we take a broader view of educational needs, as has been advocated in this article, then the E1L and E2L adult learners have a lot more in common than is usually suggested.[7]

- The second argument is that E2L speakers will probably have had positive learning experience in the past, and that the position they find themselves in is due to lack of opportunity rather than ability. E1L speakers, on the other hand, may have had negative experiences of learning in the past; it would therefore be unfair on E2L speakers to share the class with such E1L speakers.

But to qualify for the dubious pleasure of such special treatment, the E2L learners are confined to just one activity (i.e. language learning), in which they must experience learning success. The ESL provision in its present form has neither the expertise nor resources to offer the ethnic minorities a *choice* of areas where failure to learn in one subject can be balanced by success in another.

It would surely benefit the ethnic minorities to forego the 'privilege' of sharing classes with learners who have positive learning experiences, and have instead access to expertise and resources of Adult Basic Education, Adult Education and Further Education in general.

On the whole the benefits to ethnic minorities of a separate ESL provision are few and at best only short-term; they are gained at the expense of long-term deprivation of urgently needed broad education.

THE ALTERNATIVE

The Integrated Training for Adults as discussed in the Section 'Example of a Course Model' offers a coherent and systematic approach to meet the broad educational/training needs of ethnic minority and indigenous adults.

Phase One of the programme belongs in an educational context; it could and should be delivered either on a self-study basis to those with few learning difficulties, or in the classroom to those with learning or language problems.

Language development would take place as part of all the modules available to potential students. ESL as an independent entity would cease to exist and would be replaced by just one module as part of the expanded basic education service.

Instead of relying of TESL expertise the staff would have to offer skills in a number of other subjects, at least at a basic level. There should not be any individuals or sections taking sole responsibility for Ethnic Minority Education: instead it should belong to the Adult Basic Education (ABE) sector and the college as a whole.

The existing expertise in ABE and TESL could cross-fertilise and eventually lead to the disappearance of such distinctions.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the past five years the needs of the ethnic minorities have expanded from 'social' to 'vocational'. If these are to be met, education providers must address themselves to the ethnic minorities' broad education and not just to narrow linguistic needs. The linguistic deficiencies themselves can be met through other key educational needs.

ESL as it exists at the moment actually distracts both the ethnic minorities and the education providers away from the real issues. The time has to come to re-evaluate it in the present circumstances and perhaps replace it with something more appropriate.

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Creative Writing in English as a Second Language Work

JANE McLAUGHLIN

Jane McLaughlin is a Lecturer in English as a Second Language at Streatham and Tooting Institute (Inner London Education Authority). From 1981 to 1983 she was co-ordinator of a project in ESL for unemployed people in the Borough of Lewisham.

A few years ago, if one mentioned to teachers of ESL the possibility of doing creative writing, the idea was not often received with much enthusiasm. The urgency of meeting students' practical language needs was and is quite rightly the first consideration. People often felt that creative writing was unnecessary, or at best a pleasant diversion for advanced students who might have some spare time to do it. Things have changed. What follows is my own personal view of why and how creative writing is important in ESL teaching, but it results not only from my own work but also from discussions with a lot of other teachers and the exchange of ideas with them.

With a number of major developments in ESL teaching, such as the encouragement of student autonomy and the development of the use of the first language in teaching ESL, we have come to focus more on how people see themselves in society, and as language learners and users, and not only on the necessary development of specific language skills in particular areas of competence. While students must of course acquire the language they need to fulfil the practical demands of their lives, it is surely positive to emphasise as well what they can contribute. This is an area in which I think we still have a lot to learn from teachers of literacy to native speakers in basic education. In this field much work has been done to develop students' ability to express themselves creatively in writing and to record their personal experiences, and this work has been shown to be valuable to students personally in increasing confidence and self-esteem, and also to have a strong and positive effect on the students' ability to use language in other areas of their writing and lives.

It is as well perhaps to say here that although there has been much discussion of whether the term creative writing should or should not be used, I still think it is right to use it, though certainly in a broad sense which includes the recording of personal experience, the writing of traditional stories, and many other kinds of writing too. Also, many of the issues discussed here are global ones, to which creative writing is only one approach, in a field which is changing and developing and in which the concept of student need is being transformed in the minds of students and teachers alike.

In the teaching of ESL I started from the following position: having taught English to native speakers in schools and adult institutes and having seen the value of creative writing, its importance to the students and its effect on their language development, it seemed reasonable to suppose that the expression of experience, imagination and ideas would be equally important (if not more so) in learning a second language. I have since done a lot of practical work in this area, and it has only served to reinforce this view. We are of course talking of learning a second language in the sense of learning the language of a society in which one is living but which in general has a different language from one's own. The term "second language" is often inaccurate as many students speak more than one language before they start to learn English, and irrelevant in that speakers of more than one language often use only their mother tongue in some areas of their lives, and only the other language in others. But it is the term that we use, for want of a better, to describe learning the language of the society in which one is living, rather than learning a foreign language for academic, business or other purposes in another country. We have adapted some of the methodology of EFL for the teaching of ESL, but it seems to me that we should learn too from the work of teachers of English to native speakers, concerned as they are with language in society and how that society affects a person's ability to use the language. It is encouraging therefore, to see that much work is now being done in ESL in the development of creative writing. Many language schemes now have their own magazines to promote and publish student writing, and acknowledge its importance in their course planning and teaching. Work of this kind will not *always* be appropriate; some groups may not want to do it, but I believe it should be regarded as one of the components which make up an ESL programme, and the enthusiasm with which many students have written, and have read and shared each others' work shows that they want it.

A MINE OF EXPERIENCE

Usually, to work with any group of students in adult basic education is to feel that it is very important to find ways of channelling the vast store of experience and ability they bring with them. To be faced with a multilingual group of ESL students who have come together in this particular place from many different countries, for many different reasons, and who have often passed through cataclysmic experiences in order to get here (many are refugees) is to feel this yet more overpoweringly. The wealth and diversity of culture, knowledge, ability and experience concentrated in a small group can be amazing to consider. And yet the society in which they now find themselves living has apparently little interest in finding a use for these things or even recognising their existence. And even within the group, students cannot share these things without a common language. There are some monolingual classes, but in a multilingual class, this is usually English. Obviously one has to tread carefully; there may be painful and tragic things in their lives which students cannot bring themselves to talk or write about. But often even this does not apply; one senses sometimes that the English class is the *only* place where people have shown any interest in their history, and students may actually wish to bring these experiences of exile and loss to share with the class, and may be a valuable support to each other. Many refugees from Vietnam have written down accounts of their sea journeys.

There are a myriad of other reasons why people from other countries may find it rewarding and useful to do creative writing; they may wish to record things they miss,

for themselves or for the people with whom they are now in contact. This may include the proper celebration of festivals and observance of family and religious ceremonies, things they are now no longer able to do in the way they would wish, maybe because of the lack of proper facilities, foods, or simply lack of money. Students often seem to find great satisfaction in writing about how things were done in their own countries, when they could be done in the proper way.

Students often like to write descriptions of members of their families. I have several examples of descriptions of older members of the family — usually grandfathers or grandmothers — either still in the country of origin, or dead, which celebrate that person's gifts as well as being an honest appraisal of character. Here is a short example (written by a Turkish Cypriot man):

> "One Hundred Years.
>
> My grandfather was born in Cyprus in August 1879. He was a very soft hearted man. He would give his life for his friends, he was very kind and would give anything away. All his life he was a farmer and he had eleven children who worked on the farm. The farm produced tobacco and hay. The children would do most of the work while he would laze around.
>
> My grandfather passed away in August 1979".

This may in a way be preserving the "family mythology" in a new country — the family stories which are remembered, retold, and probably embroidered by succeeding generations. Equally, people may simply have less outlet for their creative energies than they did in the country they came from. Story telling, music, drama, making things by hand, the pattern of seasonal and religious activities, the satisfaction of fulfilling a certain social or family role — the loss of all these things may leave a person feeling frustrated, devalued. I do not wish to suggest that creative writing (or any other activity) can replace what has been lost or left behind. But it can be a way of expressing one's feelings about loss, of recording what used to be.

The experience of migration is an important one, maybe the most important one they will ever have for some people. Many wish to record this experience and the difficulties of settling in a new place. Some describe pleasure at their new life, others describe difficulties ranging from grief at leaving children behind and the problems of facing life without the support of an extended family, to the minor things which can harrass you in a new place, such as being unable to work the cooker. And what happens after the migration has taken place? People often face misunderstanding, prejudice, stereotyping, racism. Much has been written on this by people from the Caribbean and people from Africa and the subcontinent who have been educated in English, but the voices of others should also be heard.

"MY STUDENTS AREN'T ADVANCED ENOUGH"

The development of creative writing is something that can begin at the earliest stages of language learning. The language experience method, by which the student's own utterances are written down and used for reading and writing work is surely the earliest stage of this. It shows a student from the beginning that what they have to say is important, interesting and *worth writing down* — it is difficult enough sometimes to convince a native speaker of this, still more a speaker of another language. I am at present teaching an African woman who can speak a little and read and write hardly at all, and has very little confidence in her ability to learn. Following the birth of her grandson here, she told me about some of the ways of feeding babies in her country. I wrote these down as she told me, and sent the account home for her daughter-in-law, a fluent English speaker, to check that I had got the details right. This short piece will be published in the students' magazine, along with other pieces on the care of children, and I hope that this woman will get both pleasure and confidence from seeing her words in print, besides getting some valuable reading and writing work out of it.

An excellent account of the language experience approach can be found in Jane Mace's book *Working with Words*, and also the ALBSU paper, *The Language Experience Approach to Literacy Teaching*, by Rhianned Pratley. The methods have to be adapted for use with second-language learners, who do not have the resources of spoken language of native speakers, but the basic principles apply.

As a student begins to develop the ability to write in English she can be encouraged to put her own words on to paper as well as work on basic functional literacy. Obviously with elementary students there is only elementary language to work with, and the writing will probably be concerned with the simplest of language and ideas, but that is no reason for not doing it. At this level students will probably need a lot of help in producing anything; they may need linguistic prompts, such as the beginnings of sentences, or questions, they may be simply re-phrasing sentences already learnt. They may produce a text as simple as this: "I like my English friends. I like the shops. I like some English food. I don't like the English winter. It's very cold." (by a young woman from Hong Kong). The point is, it is not necessary to wait until people have "a certain standard" of language to do it.

WHY NOT IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES?

Of course writing in English should not replace writing in the mother tongue. Things will be written in letters home and in other ways which will not and maybe could not be expressed in English. Some people will write for and in their own communities. But the importance of English as a language of sharing within the classroom has been described briefly above.

And many students cannot write their own languages. English is the first language they learn to write. Therefore desirable though it might be for them to write in their own languages they cannot. I know of a few students who have first become literate in English and then gone on to learn to write their mother tongue, and it would be interesting to know how often this happens.

Jane Mace's words on the printing of student writing have been often quoted, and will probably be familiar to many readers of this journal, but they seem to me so relevant here that it is worth repeating them:

> "But if teaching literacy to adults is merely to enable them to read other people's writing, it denies those adults the right to be read themselves. We are teaching merely the ability to consume print. In the act of writing and acquiring an audience someone can change their entire idea of themselves, abandon their low self-esteem, assert their right to be heard. They also make a qualitative change to the literature available to the general reading public". *(Working with Words)*

The writing of ESL students should be disseminated

beyond the ESL classroom and so may eventually contribute to this qualitative change. People have things to say which are answers to questions that we as white native speakers of English (which most teachers of ESL at present are) do not even know how to ask. This is of course an argument in favour of bilinguals teaching ESL, but monolingual English speakers can still find ways to help students feel they are not being "given" the English language, still to many the symbol of British colonialism, but that the language is theirs as a right, and that they have much to contribute in it.

English is the dominant and official language of most of the United Kingdom. It is the language students need to acquire to the degree which will enable them to gain access to what that society has to offer, which will enable them to contribute to society in ways which may not be possible in the first language, it is the language which students should be able to acquire to whatever degree they decide they want or need. But as teachers of ESL we know how difficult it is for many students to succeed in communicating effectively in their everyday lives; even when we have worked to prepare for a specific situation many factors can still lead to failure and breakdown of communication: unfamiliar language, missing important details, the pace of the interaction, the stress of facing a strange system. Obviously this affects students' lives in crucial ways. The feeling, often justified, that people do not want or try to understand you can lead to deep feelings of anger and rejection. The development of students' writing can therefore have a vital role to play in that it can give students a feeling of power over the language, that they have created something that is theirs, not determined by outside pressures and difficult situations in which failure can so often result. We know well that communication is not just a matter of language, but involves a complex range of psychological, physical and interpersonal factors. One might wonder, for example, what practical use it may be for a pregnant woman from India to spend a morning writing a story when her main obvious need is to communicate at the ante-natal clinic. She will need to learn the specific language for going to the clinic, but the other work she has done, especially if discussed and appreciated by the class and teacher may give her just that bit more confidence and belief that English is something she *can* use successfully, and it may help her to establish good relationships at the clinic and communicate successfully even if the language she uses is not "correct". Naturally this is an impressionistic argument and may sound fanciful to some, but it is based on the observations of students' development over some time by other teachers and myself. No-one wishes to minimise the importance of functional language; the argument is that the teaching of ESL should not only be based on the analysis of practical needs, but should also be based on what the person as an individual wants to say and has to contribute.

WAYS OF BRINGING THE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE INTO THE CLASSROOM

The relationships have to be right, and the writing is usually preceded by talk and discussion without any pressure to write. Often subjects will be suggested by the students, but many teachers of ESL have found that, with a multicultural group, discussions of different customs and cultures can produce a wealth of writing. Subjects such as festivals, food and table manners, marriage and birth customs, bringing up children, superstitions, attitudes to work and unemployment can be very successful as a lead into writing. Such discussions are invariably seen as valuable and interesting by the students, who will often contribute enthusiastically although they may lack confidence in more specific language work. Clearly the students' contribution depends on what language they have at their command, but people sharing a language often help each other, and it is often surprising how such discussion brings passive language into use, because the motivation to share culture and experience with the group can be so strong. The teacher may help to record what has been said in the class in many ways; by tape recording, by setting questions based on what students have said, to act as prompts for writing, or making her own notes on what has been said and giving students a plan or framework. Some students will not need this and will go on to write happily, but often many do, and lack the confidence to try; one way of overcoming this is by giving them some writing by another ESL student on the same theme. This can be very motivating indeed, especially when the writer is of the same background — it *shows* it can be done, and can have far more value than the use of a commercially produced text; texts designed for language teaching can be extremely arid. There are some pieces of writing I have used again and again, and they never fail to produce a response. There is one piece entitled "The Life of My Grandmother", written by an Italian woman, which is such a vivid evocation of a person, her interests, talents and abilities, such a gripping account of a full and resourceful life that many students who have read it have gone on to produce pieces of equal vividness. Some of them have not only been stimulated imaginatively by it, but have found it a useful source of language, using phrases from the original to embody their own feelings and ideas. (One reason why second-language speakers often write with such freshness is that they do not start weighed down with the luggage of catch-phrases and cliches that native speakers acquire — their expression is truly their own.)

Some of the well-tried techniques for stimulating creative writing can be used successfully with ESL students: sounds, smells, pictures, objects and word-games. But here again one has to be aware of the range of experience the students have. To show a picture of some aspect of British life may well lead to some interesting work; to show a picture of something that some of the students are familiar with, such as a tea kiosk in India will not only mean that the students who know about it will describe and explain it to the class, but that their account of the memories and associations it evokes for them may set others off to contribute their own memories, maybe bringing their own pictures later on.

Folks tales and traditional stories are a potential source so vast that their possible uses can only be hinted at here. Various collections of folk tales from different countries are now available, or students who are able to do so can write their own stories for the class to read. With a class who do not yet feel able to write their stories down, the teacher can act as scribe, writing down the story as the students tell it, and then reading it back to check the elements of it. The teacher can then produce the story written down at a subsequent class. Another way of using the resources of language in the classroom is to ask more advanced students to interpret for students whose language they share, who have a story to tell and cannot tell it in English. The teacher may record this, and write down the English part of the tape for the class to turn into a connected narrative. Folk tales can help students to express themselves both orally and in writing. Once, after

reading to the class a Turkish tale about the legendary Nasreddin I saw a normally reticent Vietnamese student tell the Chinese version of the same story in its entirety. This was the longest piece of connected speech I ever heard him produce.

Often the same story-pattern occurs in different cultures, and there is often a great deal of interest in comparing versions. The same is true of proverbs. There are often similar ones in different languages including English, but sometimes the students have to explain what the saying means. I have just been given a collection of Portuguese proverbs. Two of these, "Donkeys' voices don't reach the sky" and "The dog barks at the moon and the caravan passes by" both mean "I don't take any notice if people say unkind things about me" — I don't know of any similar one in English. The practice in asking questions and giving explanations is useful as well as interesting.

With traditional material as in other cases one may need to produce examples before students will make their own contributions. One of the reasons for this is that students may undervalue the culture and knowledge they bring with them in the context of learning English, feeling that it is irrelevant or unimportant. The use of parallel texts in mother-tongue and English can help to emphasise the value of the students' own languages in groups where the students can read their first language, besides being a valuable way of involving all students in a class where levels of English are mixed, as they so often are. It can also lead to discussions about language itself, and attitudes to varieties of language.

The kinds and ways of writing described so far are the ones which seem to find their place most frequently in the ESL classroom; some students enjoy writing fiction, poetry and fantasy. The range of this could really only be conveyed by examples, and there is not room here for these. Usually this kind of work is done by students who already enjoy doing it in their own language, but others who have never written fiction or poetry before may also like to try it.

We now believe it is better to talk about linguistic repertoires rather than the attainment of some zenith of perfection in the English language. We recognise that students will probably not wish to use English in all areas of their lives and it is right that our work in the classroom should reflect this. Students know only too well from their own experience that improvement in English does not necessarily open doors in this society and are often glad to use the English language in ways that they find personally satisfying and interesting.

LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT AND ATTITUDES TO WRITING

Student writing, especially if produced in magazines or other printed forms, may help to break down the intimidating effect of the printed word, its mystique as something mysterious and impenetrable. This may be especially true for students who come from cultures where reading and writing are seen as the province of a privileged few, and even more so for women, who may have had no education while their brothers were sent to school. It enables the students to see other texts as the product of someone else's effort, which has probably been changed and corrected just as theirs has been. This is one reason why I believe correction is an important part of creative writing and should not be seen as "spoiling" or detracting from the authenticity of what the student has produced. Of course the amount of correction that is done must be a matter for negotiation between teacher and student; some students would be intimidated and upset if their work was taken to pieces, while others will enthusiastically go over every word, wanting it to be "just right." In any case, as most readers of this will be aware, students learn best by suggesting and discussing corrections to their own work. Group correction of a piece of work by the class can be very valuable if the student agrees. If the work is to be printed and distributed then the student may want more help from the teacher in producing a text which they feel is of an acceptable standard for "public" use. This can be especially difficult in work produced by beginners or elementary students. The teacher will probably then have to do most of the correcting; this does not seem to me to falsify the student's work especially if it can be done with the help of a more advanced student; those reading it will probably judge from the simplicity of the language that it is the work of a beginner and has been corrected. And invariably the students reading it will want to know that they are reading acceptable grammar and usage, which does not preclude individuality of expression. All this helps to develop in students an attitude that reading and writing are active, critical processes.

For students who can write independently away from the classroom, personal and creative writing can give them room to spread themselves, look things up, take their time in finding what is for them the best way of saying something. They may often express ideas and aspects of their personalities that they would find difficult to communicate in the pressures of an oral situation. This again is especially true of women, who may have been brought up not to assert themselves or express strong opinions, and they may find the "privacy" of writing more congenial than saying things in class, especially a mixed one.

As for the students' general language development, increasing their ability to manipulate the structures of the language, to produce connected discourse, to recognise and produce differences of function, tone and attitude, and all the other elements that make up communicative and linguistic ability, the effect of this kind of work is of course not strictly measureable. All that can be said is that many teachers including myself believe that it *does* contribute very significantly, for all the many reasons suggested so far and no doubt for many others too.

In teaching English to speakers of other languages it is still all too possible, with the best of intentions, for the teacher to remain in more or less complete control of what goes on in the classroom and to set up their own culture, attitudes and language as the desirable model. The more students contribute, discuss, produce and share in the form of their own writing the less likely it is that this will be the reality. It is here that the supposed difference between "functional" and "creative" breaks down: the "creative" work has many vital "functions", the "functional" work will be intrinsically involved with creativity.

References:

Jane Mace. Working with Words: *Literacy Beyond School*. Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative in association with Chameleon. London 1979.

ALBSU: The Language Experience Approach to Literacy Teaching, by Rhianned Pratley. Occasional Paper.

Note:

The ESL Publishing Group in the Inner London Education Authority is in the process of producing four collections of writing by ESL students on the themes: Folk Tales and Festivals, Family and Friends, Changes, and Work and Unemployment. These books could also be used in literacy classes for native speakers. If you would like more information about these, please write, sending s.a.e. to: The ESL Publishing Group, c/o The Language and Literacy Unit, Room 4.48, County Hall, London SE1.

Bilingual Teaching and ESL

SUFIA MAJID

Sufia Majid was Project worker on the ALBSU sponsored project to develop language and literacy skills alongside manufacturing skills in the clothing industry at Tower Hamlets Training Forum. Tower Hamlets Training Forum was established to provide skills training opportunities for the local community, and in the course of the ALBSU project, Sufia had a particular responsibility for the development of bilingual methods and materials.

Tower Hamlets Training Forum was established in 1977 in response to a growing concern about the availability of training for local people. The Forum has been primarily concerned with the needs of those working in the clothing industry which has traditionally attracted those who have benefited little from any formal education in this country.

With funds from the E.E.C. Social Fund, the Greater London Council, London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the Commission for Racial Equality, a clothing skills training workshop was established to enable individuals to:

- understand the manufacturing process
- learn specific skills such as machining, pressing, etc
- learn language and literacy skills related to work needs.

Most students at the Tower Hamlets Training Forum and in the Tower Hamlets area come from rural areas of Bangladesh and their English is minimal. Some cannot read or write in their own language. Some can speak, read, and perhaps write simple sentences in English. Many students have no opportunity to speak English to anyone other than doctors, health visitors, ESL teachers or community workers familiar to them. Many students lack confidence and some have spent days at a time at home without going out. To them, it is not only the language but also the life here that is different and somewhat strange. The bilingual teacher can use her understanding of the students' culture to minimise these difficulties by reassuring students who because of their age, family situation and perhaps lack of formal education, feel little confidence in their ability to gain a new language. Take for an example, the case of a middle-aged Bangladeshi woman with three or four children who comes from a small village and speaks a dialect of Bengali. She does not see the importance of going out or learning English, "at my age". She wonders whether it will be right, what to do with her children, what other peole will think. The bilingual teacher, because she comes from the same culture and has learned successfully to live within an English culture, can explain, encourage, give confidence, and serve as a role model. Initial contact with students is easier for a bilingual teacher, and often she becomes a family confidant who can be consulted about marriages and other family matters.

Aside from this majority of students who have very little English, there is another group who are more advanced. These students can gain confidence in a bilingual teaching situation. Many have difficulties because of confusion between English as British people speak it and English as it is taught in the Indian sub-continent. For example, in Bangladesh, students are taught that contractions such as "It's, I've, Don't" are not good English. Bilingual teachers, because they experience the same difficulties, are in a better position than most monolingual teachers to discuss these points. They may, however, need access to reliable sources (e.g. books, native speakers) to clarify these problems. An intermediate or even an advanced student in a linked skills class may not be able to express a new idea in English. She or he may also be confused about a particular part of some complex process. In both these cases a bilingual teacher can help the student communicate more effectively and will recognise comprehension problems more easily than a monolingual teacher. Students feel more free to ask questions if this can be done in the mother tongue as well as in English.

In mixed level classes, I found it very useful to have a bilingual teacher and a native English speaking teacher. For example, in a mixed level class a bilingual teacher can take those students who do not know a single word of English aside. The bilingual teacher teaches the sentences — "What's your name", "My name's Razia Begum". Then the student will practise the same sentences with the native English speaking teacher. She goes further with "What's his name?" and the bilingual teacher explains the point "his" in the student's native language. Sometimes a grammatical concept like a new tense can be taught first by a bilingual teacher and then the whole lesson can be tested and re-inforced by the English speaking teacher. On the other hand a bilingual teacher can easily check whether students have understood a new concept. This helps students to remember and revise their lessons. To summarise; because students understand the bilingual teacher's explanation clearly, they feel less hesitant about practising new language with the English speaking teacher.

BILINGUAL TEACHING MATERIALS

In comparison to ordinary ESL teaching materials the available bilingual materials are not adequate. Bilingual teachers use ordinary ESL handouts and worksheets with oral mother-tongue help when needed. In linked skills classes and ESL classes, it is difficult to make bilingual worksheets because standard books in the mother tongue are unavailable in the UK. The most useful handout for both students and teachers consists of a list of English vocabulary with meaning and phonetics in mother-tongue. Many other possibilities exist:

- Handouts in the mother-tongue could explain some aspect of English culture in preparation for a role-play or dialogue in English.

- English key words could accompany complex explanations in the mother-tongue (in linked skills particularly).
- English worksheets can explain a process in English with the meanings of key words in the mother-tongue.
- Illustration can reinforce information in all handouts and worksheets.

People are now understanding the importance of bilingual teaching. Many monolingual ESL teachers want to know firstly, what, apart from ordinary ESL teaching, a bilingual teacher can do with students, and secondly, how a monolingual teacher can use some bilingual teaching strategies. Moreover, we as bilingual teachers should understand our role clearly. I think the time has come to organise bilingual teaching and training for bilingual teachers in a comprehensive way, and I hope this will be taken up.

BILINGUAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

The following comments are based on my observation of different bilingual classes, discussions with other bilingual teachers and also on my own experience as a bilingual teacher. It is obvious that different teachers have different styles of teaching: here, I would like to focus on some methods commonly used by bilingual teachers.

- The bilingual tutor can introduce the subject or title of the lesson, and key words as they arise, in the mother tongue. One word, for example, "pronunciation" given in the mother tongue can help students orient themselves to the lesson which follows. Often the students themselves ask for clarification of a term in their mother tongue.
- The bilingual tutor can explain the structure of sentences in the mother tongue, for example the structural difference between the sentences "What is she doing?" and "She is sewing." Here a bilingual teacher can explain question formation in the mother tongue. In the example of "She's sewing" contractions can be explained. The same applies to other grammatical rules. After the mother tongue explanation, the bilingual teacher will always practise the structure with the student in English.
- The bilingual tutor can explain complex processes in the mother tongue, for example dart manipulation or how to prepare a single feed for a baby. Students, particularly those whose English is weak, always prefer to hear an explanation of a process they need to apply, in their tongue. The explanation can then be repeated in English. In this way students can remember the process more easily. They are sure they have understood.
- The bilingual tutor can check whether students have understood complete instructions for a complex process or only part of them, by questioning in the mother tongue. She can then explain a particular part. This minimises the chance of error. In teaching washing instructions for different kinds of clothes for example, students should be taught the appropriate water temperature for these clothes. They must know the difference between hot, boiling, warm and cold. They may understand "Wash the shirt" and not understand "in luke warm water".
- The bilingual tutor can relate a term to the equivalent word in the students' own language and culture; for example, the bilingual teacher can explain the words "Paisley" or "rice pudding" by saying "It is similar to 'Kolki'," a traditional Indian pattern, or "paish", a traditional Indian food.
- The bilingual tutor can play a taped dialogue in English, discuss the vocabulary and sentence structure in the mother tongue, then make the students practise in English. For example, play a taped dialogue on visiting a clinic, tell the students the meaning of vocabulary such as "appointment", "health visitor", "immunisation", etc., in the mother tongue, and teach the vocabulary just like any other ESL teacher. Then explain the structure of different types of sentence in the dialogue and make the students practise in English with role play, direct questioning and drill. The tutor can also explain the importance of visiting a clinic in the mother tongue.

The proportion of mother tongue use in a bilingual class varies according to each classroom situation. Where students' English is minimal, the mother tongue is most useful; where their English is more advanced then less mother tongue needs to be used but that can be used in a precise way.

Some Advantages of Bilingual Teaching

Bilingual teaching is more enjoyable to the students because it makes the lesson easier and students feel free to discuss any problem — language or family. Moreover, bilingual teachers, as they know more (or less) about their students' family and educational background, can easily assess their students' ability and can plan lessons accordingly.

It can be a short cut way of teaching. For example, in a particular lesson, if students know the meaning of key words or the method for a process in their mother tongue, it becomes easier to learn the language and remember the process. Not only that, it minimises the chance of error because when a student is in doubt she or he can question the bilingual teacher spontaneously which is not always possible with a monolingual teacher out of hesitation or embarrassment. Another great advantage of bilingual teaching is giving hints in the mother tongue to prepare for an English lesson. Even with advanced students one can save a lot of time by explaining the contexts or subjects of a lesson.

Some Disadvantages of Bilingual Teaching

In the presence of a bilingual teacher, it is the usual trend for students to speak in the mother tongue even when they need to speak English. In community-based classes students have a tendency to speak about family-life and day to day problems with the bilingual teacher in the mother tongue. Of course they must be allowed to talk about problems but if the bilingual teacher is not alert about the timing, she may not have time for teaching English. One way in which this problem can be overcome is by setting up a half hour advisory session with a community worker inside the classroom. Students can explain their problems in English (which they have learnt in the class) with the help of a bilingual teacher (if necessary), thus benefiting both ways by learning language and coping with day to day problems.

In a class of students with different mother tongues, the students having the same mother tongue as the teacher have a tendency to ask questions and expect answers from the bilingual teacher in their common mother tongue. In such cases the teacher feels embarrassed and finds it unfair to other students to speak in her mother tongue. That could be overcome by giving an interesting

worksheet to the other groups while one is teaching something in mother tongue. It is best though to keep the use of mother tongue to a minimum in such a class. Bilingual teachers are obviously in a better position to discuss and explain various problems with the English language but they may themselves have difficulty with some of those problems, because of basic differences in the way English is taught and read here. For this reason they need access to reliable sources of information to clear up these problems.

BILINGUAL TEACHING IN LINKED SKILLS

In any skills teaching situation it is important that students understand the instructions given by the skills teacher, and are able to query the instructions and get further explanations before actually practising the skill. Second language speakers have the added difficulty in understanding and expressing themselves in English, to make sure that they understand the instructions. With a bilingual teacher in the classroom this process of explanation and questioning can obviously take place in the mother tongue and later the English can be taught which will eventually enable the student to communicate directly with the skills teacher. Also a bilingual teacher, having the same mother tongue as the student, can guess very quickly the student's difficulty.

Some of the key points are summarised below:

- The bilingual teacher translates and simplifies the subject matter. By both translating and simplifying a complex process which students have to apply practically, students can understand the skill quicker, e.g. the skills teacher may introduce "Dart manipulation" through several theoretical explanations and practical examples. The bilingual teacher will focus on one or two practical examples and explain the process in the mother tongue.

- The bilingual teacher expresses the subject matter with reference to the students' own language and culture which gives students greater understanding. Even students who have an average level of English language gain confidence through this, e.g. the bilingual teacher can explain the word "Paisley" by saying it is similar to "Kolki".

- Bilingual teaching avoids students applying the wrong meaning and therefore, minimises the chance of errors in skills, e.g. the skills teacher may ask the students "Press the treadle gently/lightly". The students may only under stand the word "Press".

- Through bilingual teaching, understanding becomes more lucid which makes it easier for students to remember and re-express lessons. It is important that students remember certain processes e.g. threading a sewing machine. Explaining this in the mother tongue reinforces the process and helps the students to remember it.

- By making the lesson easier, it is more enjoyable for the students. The students feel free to come to the bilingual teacher first rather than to the skills teacher and talk about general issues, e.g. health, social security, employment, etc.

- In the presence of a bilingual teacher, there is a tendency for students to go to the bilingual teacher rather than to the skills teacher. This difficulty can be overcome by joint effort of the skills and bilingual teachers — the latter encouraging students and then later pushing the students to go to the skills teacher.

Acquisition: a Common Factor in Teaching Literacy to Native and Non-Native Speakers

JANE RAWLINGSON MACKILLOP

Jane Rawlingson Mackillop is an ESL Tutor/Co-ordinator for the Adult Education Service in Sheffield. During 1983-84 she worked as an Instructor for the Freshman Writing Program at the University of Southern California.

Rather than describing what is different about teaching literacy to non-English speakers, I want to consider the factors common to all literacy teaching, commenting on any of special interest for ESL students.

Much of what I have to say is based on observing and being involved in the Model Literacy Program at the University of Southern California last year.

THE THREE Rs

The pre-requisites for successful literacy teaching can be summed up in the three Rs: Relevance, Respect and Relaxation. Beginning with relevance, unless what the student is reading has meaning, unless understanding it is going to make a difference to his life, then learning is mechanical drudgery. Martin Good and John Holmes write:[1]

> Literacy should never be separate from its purpose. You are always reading or writing something for some reason. That's why specially written primers are so limited in their usefulness.

Michael Holzman goes further in this criticism of specially written primers:[2]

> "Readers" are fake books, books meant to be irrelevant.

The second essential, respect, refers to the relationship between the tutor and student. This is of paramount importance and must be based on trust and mutual respect. Learning to read, like any new activity means exposing yourself and risking ridicule and failure. If the student feels confident with the tutor, he or she learns more, faster. A relaxed mind is better able to concentrate.[3] This relaxed mind is the third necessity.

THE CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS

Given the importance of what is read and of the relationship between teacher and taught, how should the tutor proceed with new students? This was a problem faced by sixteen instructor/researchers at the University of Southern California in Autumn 1983. The University had agreed to pilot a "model literacy program" for the California Conservation Corps, using staff from the Freshman Writing Program. This was a new venture for all concerned. Whilst a number of institutions and companies in England take an interest in the educational development of their employees (e.g. Industrial Language Training and Paid Educational Leave Schemes) this is more unusual in America. There has been no Adult Literacy Campaign as there was in England beginning in 1975, nor is there a central unit similar to ALBSU. The USC instructors were familiar with teaching writing to first year undergraduates ("freshmen"). They were not used to teaching literacy to economically, socially and educationally deprived young men and women from ethnic minority ghettoes in central Los Angeles.

The California Conservation Corps, whose philosophy is summed up in the motto: "Hard work, low pay, miserable conditions" was modelled on the Civilian Conservation Corps, a public works programme of the Depression years. Governor Jerry Brown revived the work/training ethos of the original corps eight years ago. Corpsmembers are recruited through the equivalent of Jobcentres and the grapevine and they work for a year on resource conservation and emergency related projects throughout the state of California.

Some of the corpsmembers were alphabetically illiterate; most were functionally illiterate, that is they could read and write minimally but almost never had reason to do so. About half had a mother tongue other than English and a few spoke virtually no English at all. The Model Literacy Program was arranged so that the corpsmembers were split into small groups, maximum six students, and met up to three times a week, with the same instructor, for an hour. Entry into the Conservation Corps is ongoing so there was a rolling intake and fluctuating numbers.

The sixteen instructor/researchers approached their groups in sixteen different ways. One group admitted to their instructor that they enjoyed poetry and they read and wrote poems. Another group, mobilised by an instructor who was a former Marine and who had served for three years in Vietnam, read and wrote war memoirs; his were about Vietnam, theirs about gang-warfare and Watts and Vernon, two of the most infamous ghettoes in LA. A third instructor felt unable to make contact with an alphabetically illiterate student for several weeks. Finally, one day, he asked the student to demonstrate some of the tai-chi jitsu moves they were writing about (student talking, instructor writing). The student, who ran a martial arts studio in Long Beach in his spare time, spent twenty minutes demonstrating a whole routine of kicks, blocks and punches, and the roles of teacher and student were reversed. Thereafter they both felt more able to communicate and learn. For some groups, autobiography proved a useful stepping-stone to literacy, and students either wrote or told their life-stories into a tape-recorder. Several instructors used this method in different ways and felt it necessary to be as frank with their students as they were expecting them to be. One instructor, a former

clergyman, briefed his group in interview techniques of the kind used by community activists. The corps members then interviewed other instructors, the Model Literacy Program staff and finally senior faculty members of the University. Much like mastering assertion techniques, this had the effect of giving confidence to the initially defensive and vulnerable young adults. This confidence was then carried over into their reading and writing.

One student, in a mixed group of non-native speakers (Mexican) and Blacks, presented seemingly intractable problems. He was twenty-three, married, with one son. He had gone through the Los Angeles Unified School District (c.f. ILEA) system from the age of six, dropped out at thirteen and was unable to read or write at all in either English or Spanish. His instructor used several approaches. Rather than a basic reader she used a children's story book written in English and Spanish so that Lou could predict what was coming and fasten on to meaning in context in order to give him confidence. He was thrilled with it and took it home to show his son. He also made up his own texts by dictating to the instructor (even in Spanish, thereby teaching her some Spanish). They also used some Laubach materials. These are part of a highly structured approach to literacy teaching designed for use by volunteer tutors. By using these, the instructor could ascertain where Lou had blanks in deciphering letters or words but his interest was not engaged as it had been with the Spanish/English stories and his concentration, at best erratic, tended to flag. As a result of the tutoring Lou began to act like a reader. He bought himself a pen and a notebook and started to take an interest in his progress in contrast to his earlier acceptance of his failure. This was according to his instructor's plan. Influenced by Frank Smith's writing, she wanted him to act like reader, as if "belonging to the club" until he actually was a reader.

THE FRIENDSHIP NEWSPAPER

The non-English speaking group, mainly Vietnamese and Hispanics, were initially hostile to the literacy programme. Since the California Conservation Corpsmembers work manually (clearing streams, planting trees, emergency flood and fire control) and there were fluent Spanish and Chinese speakers amongst the crew leaders, there had been no need to speak, read or write English before. One especially anxious corpsmember at first refused to say anything in any language. Finally his instructor coaxed him into speaking Spanish and translated this into English. The instructor dealt with the group anxiety indirectly. She had the idea of running a newspaper for the literacy programme which the ESL group could write and edit. At first this seemed crazy given the corpsmembers' limitations, but the immediate effect was that their attitude changed overnight. The instructor said at the time, "Instead of fearing English, they are becoming eager to master it. They are producing something in English that others can actually read and enjoy." Instead of having classes as such, their time with the instructor revolved around running the paper. They collected articles, poems, sports' reports and stories from the other groups, thereby giving them a focus for their writing. They conducted surveys of corpsmembers' favourite food, for example, and what are the hardest/easiest jobs in the Conservation Corps. They compiled special announcements and corpsmembers' birthdays. For the first time they had a reason to speak and read and write. They were concentrating on communication rather than on language activities, which might have been another approach to their problems. Since the group did not have a common language they had to discuss the contents and layout of the paper with the tutor and among themselves in English. They had to conduct their surveys and ask questions of the other corpsmembers in English and the need to communicate forced them to pronounce more clearly. This was the "Krashen theory" in action.[4]

THE ACQUISITION THEORY

Steve Krashen is a professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Southern California and his "acquisition theory" seems set to revolutionize English language teaching. Briefly, his theory hypothesises that learning and acquiring a language are two separate activities, one conscious and the other subconscious. You acquire a language when you focus on the meaning, not the form of the message, as a child does when learning to talk. The message must be comprehensible and relevant since language is about communication, something you do best when you are not under pressure to speak, but are sufficiently interested to want to. Learning on the other hand, fills any gaps, by providing conscious rules and grammar to refer to, thereby acting as an editor or monitor. What might be termed the "acquisition factor" has also been isolated by Barbara Tizard and Martin Hughes in their research into how young children learn.[5] They describe how young children acquire language, literacy and numeracy in what is termed "the curriculum of the home" because of the desire to be like adults and communicate with those they love. "Children learn fastest when applying themselves to tasks which bear some meaning."

Both of these theories about learning depend on what Krashen calls "comprehensible input", that is understanding before speaking or writing. (The ESL students knew how to form questions and the names of the colours before they conducted a survey of corpsmembers' favourite colours, for the newspaper, for example). There are instances of the "input" being available but students not learning and this learning block is called by Krashen, an "affective filter". The affective filter hypothesis claims that when affective conditions are not optimal, when the student is not motivated, does not identify with speakers of the second language or is over anxious about his performance a mental block will prevent him acquiring the language.

Krashen has extended his acquisition theory into the field of literacy and concludes that just as linguistic competence comes from hearing and understanding the language before wanting to speaking it, so writing competence "comes from large amounts of self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure. It is acquired subconsciously; readers are unaware they are acquiring writing competence while they are reading and unaware of this accomplishment after acquisition has taken place."[6] This was the framework within which the sixteen instructor/researchers were working.

THE "ME" SERIES

Besides stretching and stimulating corpsmembers' ability to read and write, the Director of the Model Literacy

Program, Olga Connolly, tried to widen their horizons by means of a set of seminars called the "Me" series. Here she describes the ethos behind the series:

> "A corpsmember once explained to her partner these weekly seminars which tied together areas of liberal arts, humanities and sciences. 'I understand that Olga wants me to know that the universal environment and what goes on in it somehow relates to me,' she said. Her succinct description produced the informal title "ME" Series. The seminars on topics designed to expand the corpsmembers' horizons in knowledge and synergistic reasoning are indispensable to the development of functional literacy. Environmental, scientific, anthropological and cultural understandings must be present in an individual if he or she is to really utilize the alphabetical tools of literacy. Without such understandings, even career exploration programmes become little more than vacuous exercises, which fail to ameliorate the young persons' alienation from the society or their sense of lostness.
>
> In my work with the corpsmembers I rediscovered what I have been confronted with throughout the years of guidance among the inner-city (and suburban) youth everywhere. They had rehearsed long vocabularies of words and did not know what those words expressed. They had little notion about themselves, how they fit into our society, and about life in general.
>
> The corpsmembers who had not the slightest idea about the functions of their bodies or brains could not possibly understand or strive to develop their potential to learn. Having no understanding and admiration of the artistry and precision, marvellous functionality of a human being, they could not be expected to be keen on self-preservation and preservation of others from drug abuse, for example. Could the term "space age" have any meaning for them if they had no idea that the Earth is a part of a specific planetary system which rotates around the sun; or what the consequences are of the Earth's rotation around its own axis? Similarly, having no historical understanding of democracy, how could they be expected to register and vote; and even if some charismatic individual or cause persuaded them to do so, to vote in an objective, responsible fashion? Reading and writing are communication tools for expressing and exchanging mental images, variations on these, and comments and suggestions about them. When one's intellect has mastered only a limited range of experience and understanding, and hardly any diversity of images, exchange of ideas with the outside world will become quickly self-limiting. The tools of communication cannot be used with any sophistication."[7]

The "ME" series began with an exploration of different aspects of the word "literacy" and in subsequent seminars corpsmembers discussed concepts such as technology, democracy, fiction and reality. Wherever possible Olga invited outside speakers. A description of how a newspaper is put together and a discussion about the role of the press was lead by a black reporter. After a knifing incident among the corpsmembers, a community leader who had been jailed with Martin Luther King, encouraged the corpsmembers to look at racism among their own groups. A surgeon gave a lecture on the function of the human body, in particular the relationship between the hand and the brain. There were practical sessions on topics like consumer-education, nutrition and preventative medicine.

TRAINING VERSUS EDUCATION

Whilst it could be argued that anyone with a basic education in an American (or British) school should be familiar with this sort of general knowledge, it is often not the case, either with literacy or ESL students. Tutors, too, have gaps in their general knowledge. The "Me" series had the effect of pulling together instructors and corpsmembers in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Whilst this is so obviously a good thing as not to need stating, it was interesting to read an *Economist* leader in September which put it in a more pragmatic context.

Commenting on a report commissioned by the Manpower Services Commission and National Economic Development Office, in a paragraph headed "A narrow training for yesterday?" *The Economist* concluded that:

> "It is probably true that systematic vocational training programmes contribute to economic success. Only probably because nobody has yet proved that cause and effect are as simple as some boosters claim . . . Britain's workforce should be highly skilled and adaptable. But those goals are not achieved by making training a fetish. Britain needs a workforce prepared to change jobs and update skills as new technologies evolve. It must be self-confident enough to learn. Each member of it must have the strength and self-knowledge to demand the necessary teaching. The real objective is a well educated workforce that then wants to be trained. Many policy makers now believe that more teenagers should be taken out of the labour market and spend much more of their time on narrow vocational studies. This is not the right solution. It will force children at an even earlier age to settle on one vocation, and one set of skills. Instead they should be made to think, and told how to demand as many skills as they can get. That means more general education, earlier, not more technical training which they have not been educated to want or absorb . . . Choosing education as the essence of training policy would mean shaking Britain's education system to its roots. But that is the only choice that will provide a demand for the quantity and quality of training that Britain needs."[8]

IMPLICATIONS

The Model Literacy Program was similar to some ESL and literacy classes in England. The instructor/tutor had the problems of a rolling intake and differing levels of ability within the same group. In addition they had students who were sometimes unwilling and mixed groups of native and non-native speakers. The instructors' reaction to these problems was to work with their students individually and as a group. So they might start off with a group "rap" session, an airing of bad-feeling or blues to clear the air and then work on their own reading or writing activities. Each group had its own identity as it absorbed the interests of the instructor and explored what the group found most appealing. The group whose instructor wrote and made movies in the Cinema department watched videos extensively and then talked and wrote about the modern hero and violence. The group who had first-hand experience of gang warfare

created a joint radio play which they performed at the end of the semester. What these groups had got away from was the idea that literacy means decipherment skills and writing means inscription. Here, literacy was a bi-product of interest.

This is increasingly the situation with literacy classes in this country, though we are sometimes coy about saying so. A literacy class that begins as a class for decipherment skills on a working-class estate with a group of women rapidly becomes a dynamo for changing the circumstances in which they find themselves, whether financial (dealing with the DHSS, etc), psychological (children's problems, anxiety) or creative (an outlet for thwarted imagination). In a parallel situation ESL classes have been moving away from straightforward grammatical/notional/situational syllabuses to an emphasis on learning language in its communicative context. Though the term 'linked skills', which is used to describe a course which sets out to impart a skill first and language second, seems to be a retrogressive step toward strictly pragmatic language there is a big difference between an ESL class in which a dialogue about buying a postal order at the Post Office is learned by heart and a course in computers with simplified back-up material and some mother-tongue translation. The former is a make-believe world in which the English person in the other side of the dialogue has to be primed on what to say, too, the latter is real communication. Just as much of understanding the written word is reliant on catching hold of hooks on which to hang meaning, rather than decoding each and every word, so a lot of understanding the spoken language depends on getting the gist. This doesn't mean that we should teach above our students' ability to comprehend but that perhaps we make too few demands of them and that can be boring. This will result in more mistakes but if we accept that fluency precedes correctness then it is worth the errors.

CONCLUSION

In his explanation of the part of the Acquisition Theory that deals with understanding what you hear, comprehensible input as he calls it, Krashen suggests that "we acquire by understanding language that contains structure a bit beyond our current level of competence (i + 1). (In terms of teaching literacy, "i" is where the student is at now, the point from which the tutor should start). Krashen goes on to say that although the input must contain i + 1, it need not contain *only* i + 1, since if the acquirer understands the input and there is enough of it then i + 1 will automatically be provided. This implies that the teacher need not set out to cover specifically each student's next level of competence since if successful understanding occurs it is unnecessary.

It is for this reason that the acquisition syllabus he and Tracy Terrell outline in *The Natural Approach*[9] is not the answer to a tutor's prayer (though it is interesting and well-worth studying). You have always to look at your student in your class in relation to you. As yet there is no acquisition-orientated literacy scheme. That is how it should be. The onus is then on the teacher to look at the students and together choose what is most interesting and suitable. The acquisition theory spells the end of "teacher-proof" materials and the beginning of greater collaboration between student and teacher. A lot of this happens anyway as the tutor intuitively seeks out of the cupboard what he or she thinks is most appropriate or recommends a course or evening class that might appeal and for which he or she provides back-up material. All of this is done with the sneaking feeling that this is not the way it ought to be done, that somewhere there is a magic text-book or answer. Relax, there isn't.

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Integrating First and Second Language Speakers of English

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INTRODUCTION

"If we live together and work together why shouldn't we learn together?"

"Because my first language is different does that mean I am always different?"

These questions, asked by students, demand an examination of the learning situations for second language speakers of English today. The needs of second language speakers of English are not always met by learning with second language speakers only. Immigrants who live and work within the wider community should not automatically be placed in learning situations with other second language speakers, nor is it correct to assume that the learning of English as a second language should always take place with second language speakers on an on-going basis: it should be possible that first and second language speakers of English be integrated for English literacy, numeracy and communication classes. Consequently, it is essential to consider the present day needs of first and second language speakers of English.

It is the intention of this paper to examine the validity of integrated classes for first and second language speakers of English and to set out some of the the problems that arise and guidelines for solving them. Such integrated classes refer to the learning of English and communication skills, including reading, writing and oral communications. For the purpose of this paper I am suggesting that students be integrated by design. Obviously there are areas where first and second language speakers of English are always integrated in the same class as there is no other provision. Even in these situations, where students are mixed through lack of choice or insufficient numbers, integration should be seen as a positive step rather than 'we've got no choice".

It is not the intention here however, to examine the present fields of adult literacy or English as a second language, nor their respective areas of provision, philosophies or methodologies. Some mixing of first and second language speakers of English does not imply a merging of their two fields in any way. Their separateness is essential as is the continuation of their existence in their own right, and the idea of integrated first and second language speakers of English does not suggest that the whole form of current provision should change.

CHANGING NEEDS OF LEARNERS

The immigration patterns in the United Kingdom have changed in recent years. 'Survival English' for newly arrived immigrants is less prevalent as there are fewer immigrants. When considering the needs of the immigrant communities one is faced with a variety of circumstances. Classes for beginner students include both students who have recently arrived in the United Kingdom as well as those who have been in this country for a number of years (sometimes as long as 15 years). Many second language speakers have developed good coping skills, particularly oral skills, yet would like to improve their English, whilst even though there are fewer immigrants, providing for *their* needs as well as for second language speakers who have lived here for a number of years, is of prime importance. A forward looking approach emphasises the need to reassess the learning situation for second language speakers, and recently, examination of the needs of those immigrants who have resided in the United Kingdom for a number of years has highlighted the changing perspectives of second language learning. A greater priority has been given to the literacy needs of second language speakers, and as a result interest has emerged in a variety of learning situations for second language speakers.

The recognition of changing immigration patterns and needs of learners has precipitated a closer look at organisation, content and methodology of basic education teaching and part of this changing perspective must be integration of first and second language speakers of English for basic education. This integrated approach should not only be an adaptation of English as a second language provision; rather the fields of adult literacy and English as a second language should jointly consider a model of provision and good practice for integrating first and second language speakers of English.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE LEARNER?

Integrating students can provide an opportunity for learning in a multi-ethnic environment. Learning about other people's previous learning background, experience of life in Britain, family situation and a shared learning experience could be both interesting and valuable in an integrated group. It also brings together the community, people who live in the same area or who work together irrespective of their first language. It encourages groups of adults who meet together to learn as adults and acknowledges that all adult learners bring different past experiences into the learning situation. Recognition of the positive contribution that second language speakers can make to the learning situation is important. In fact, some second language speakers may be able to read or to write in English better than some first language speakers of

English, though it is often the first language speakers of English who are seen as the 'knowing' people. An integrated approach could break down these myths and enhance a positive shared learning experience. There is often a feeling of 'I've made it' when second language speakers participate in the mainstream education provision as it seems to have greater status.

For some second language learners learning with other second language speakers reinforces dependence on each other. This does not necessarily refute the importance of second language speaker groups for students who require them. Some students do prefer learning together with other second language speakers because of common cultural norms, religious observance, lack of confidence, mutual support and identification — to state a few of many reasons. Sometimes, Asian families will not allow Asian women to learn in a class of men and women; and 'women only' or 'Asian women only' classes are held. These reasons are extremely important and should be respected — English as a second language groups provide an essential function for many people, not only for language learning, but for mutual support and self-help. Immigrating is usually extremely difficult especially when the language and culture heritage is different, and English as a second language classes respond to language needs and other social and personal needs which accompany problems of isolation and alienation in immigrant populations. However, this does not hold for *all* English as a second language students *all* of the time. Beginning with an English as a second language group and moving to an integrated group at a later stage may be a viable option for some students. The need for a total second language speaker group is most probably important for all students at the beginning stages, especially when attending classes soon after arriving in Britain. It should though be possible to learn in an integrated group at a later stage if the student feels that needs will be met.

The opinions that I have reached on integrated first and second language speakers of English are based on experience of teaching integrated groups. All the students were employed, by the same employer, but they worked in different parts of the institituion. The students did not know each other before attending classes and the only common factor they shared was the same employer. A positive learning experience was valued by all the students, the groups became cohesive and the differences between first and second language speakers helped bring the groups together. I realised that the benefits of integrated groups were good and that they were possible in a variety of situations and not only in a workplace.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDENTS

It is vital that the optimum conditions are created for integrating students. A positive personal experience and an educationally sound learning experience must be guaranteed for all the students (a negative experience could be more damaging in an integrated group.) The way in which the class is set up and the teaching methodologies will determine its success: it is vital that the students agree to participate in an integrated group and understand the ramifications — in particular, first language speakers of English should not feel degraded by an integrated class, nor believe that they will need to improve in areas applicable to second language speakers, for example pronunciation.

Let us look at a few examples of second language speakers who may prefer an integrated class. What happens to the student who has mastered the basic survival skills of English and who wants to improve further? What about the student who has learnt English in the country of origin and is very literate in English? What about the student who has lived here for many years, copes really well with oral English and now wants to improve reading and writing skills? The first language speaker who has friends or neighbours who speak a second language might like to go to a class together with them and thereby learn together. There are also first language speakers who particularly value the knowledge or experience of second language speakers.

The learner's needs should be very well assessed before being placed in an integrated class. More important is the learner's level of confidence and ability to interact with a range of different people. The key to the learner's success will obviously be participation in the group and lack of confidence could quite naturally lead to withdrawal. A thorough assessment of needs and detailed student profiles are essential.

Assessment of first language speakers of English would include an evaluation of the student's present skills, level of confidence, assessed and expressed needs and interests. Discussion about past learning experience and attitudes to learning could indicate the student's willingness to learn in an integrated group. The assessment and initial interview would be initially the same for an integrated or non-integrated group. Then a discussion should ensue which would cover the following areas: personal experience of, or with, second language speakers in the community, at work, in the family; attitudes towards immigrants; feelings about an integrated class. First language students should consent to participate in an integrated group and any anxieties or apprehensions should be discussed at this stage. Students should feel free to refuse if they so choose and the teacher or organiser then decides on the appropriate provision for the student in question.

Assessment of the second language student should also be in two phases: the same assessment as would take place for an English as a second language class and then a further discussion. This is obviously more difficult as the student may not be able to communicate his or her feelings fully and the use of mother tongue is particularly helpful where possible. A profile of the student's needs, interests and topic areas would indicate if it is realistic to place the student with first language speakers. The second part of the assessment should focus on the student's experience of life in Britain, contact and attitudes towards the host community and any encounter of racism. A negative experience could be counter-productive for future learning of English as well as for interaction with the host community. The student's confidence must be great enough to engage in the group. As with first language speakers of English, agreement to learn in a integrated class must be attained and the teacher has the ultimate responsibility in deciding whether the student should enrol for an integrated class and how a group is composed.

Central to an integrated group, is the involvement of the students in the learning process: the decision making and the application. A student-centred approach is fundamental. It is the teacher who usually needs to give the students 'the tools' so that they can take responsibility for their own learning though the process of teaching students how to be involved in their learning takes a long time. This process can take even longer for second language students who are not always able to communicate fully.

Learning to learn as adults, deciding on course content together with the teacher keeps the balance between the students. Each student will know their own direction, area of work, and methods of learning during the learning process and there will not be a need to judge oneself in terms of the group, but in terms of individual needs and expectations. This facilitates a combination of first and second language speakers of English as each student will have his or her own course of action, irrespective of the first language.

The essence of this issue is the attitude of teachers and other educationalists in the field of adult basic education. Unless teachers accept the idea of integrated groups, the students cannot be expected to do so. Until integrated groups become common practice, both individual adult education schemes and students will need to express choice about integrated groups.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHER

The integrated class presents certain difficulties for the teacher. Most teachers in adult basic education have developed their skills in either the field of literacy or English as a second language. A minority are knowledgeable in both areas. Teaching an integrated group demands an insight into both fields and a knowledge of students' needs, methodologies and good teaching practice in both areas and teachers will have to learn to teach another field competently in order to have successful integrated classes.

Teaching an integrated group can also be more time-consuming for the teacher. Materials may take longer to prepare as the permutations are even greater for each student. Common areas of need or interest have to be carefully ascertained, and the concommitant planning takes longer. For example, improving spelling differs for each student and is much more involved for second language learners (there may be a different sound system from English in their first language). The factors affecting literacy learning for second language speakers are immense and often intricate: very careful and systematic planning is necessary for literacy and even more so for second language speakers especially when script and sentence construction is very different from English. Solutions to these problems may be in teacher training and in the type of provision available while team teaching is a possible way to meet the students' varied needs. The use of volunteers is another avenue to be explored: if one of the teachers or the volunteer is experienced in one or other fields, the demands on a sole teacher are reduced.

Another aspect which affects teaching an integrated group is the classroom organisation. Use of individual work, pair and group work takes the focus off the teacher and increases student participation. These groupings should vary and students can be mixed irrespective of their first languages or reading and writing skills while activities should encourage the students to help themselves or each other. The students, as a resource, are rich and invaluable and their contribution to the class is vital but it is the teacher who will have to organise the group so that positive contributions can be made.

- A language experience exercise could be attempted without the teacher, using one student as the teller and another as the scribe.

- Worksheets which could contain a self-checking section should be used.

- Students should learn to consult each other, dictionaries and source books individually or jointly.

Such classroom organisation would actively involve the students both as learners and as contributors. This further equalises the focus and balance between the students and first and second language speakers of Engish can share a learning experience without the first language speakers assuming the role of teaching the second language learners.

If the learning is facilitated in such a way, the students will have the chance to become autonomous and independent. The differences between first languages will become less important as the aim will be for students to be accountable for their own learning and for evaluating their own progress.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, may I suggest that first and second language speakers of English have come to accept separate classes because that is how adult basic education has been organised. A process of changing this orientation is important in order to meet the needs of adults and the community in Britain today and in the future.

Integrated classes can be successful with the correct support from the teacher. The students achieve on many levels, both in terms of learning experience and personal social experience. It is now up to the educationalists to consider integrated classes and try and implement them, even initially as an experiment.

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